

Message Text

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43

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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USIA-15 SAM-01 AID-20 SAB-01 IO-14 DRC-01 /135 W

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R 121300Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1274

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

USCINCSO

AMCONSUL CALI

AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

AMCONSUL RIO

UNCLAS BOGOTA 1209

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, CO, PN, US

SUBJECT: REACTION TO PANAMANIAN STATEMENT ON COLOMBIAN TRANSIT RIGHTS

REF: BOGOTA 1073

BRASILIA AND RIO FOR ASST SECY KUBISCH

1.BEGIN SUMMARY: SUBSEQUENT TO THE GOC NOTE OF EARLY FEBRUARY, REASSERTING COLOMBIAN RIGHTS OF TRANSIT ON THE PANAMANIAN ISTHMUS, PANAMANIAN NEGOTIATOR LOPEZ GUEVERA AT A PRESS CONFERENCE DESCRIBED THE 1914 TREATY GUARANTEEING SUCH RIGHTS AS NOT BINDING. COLOMBIAN OFFICIALS, AMPLY SUPPORTED BY THE PRESS, HAVE REFUTED LOPEZ GUEVERA'S CLAIM. FOREIGN MINISTER VAZQUEZ HAS STATED THAT HE MAY RAISE THE ISSUE AT THE MEXICAN MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS. END SUMMARY

2. THE COLOMBIAN GOVT AND PRESS HAVE REACTED SHARPLY TO THE REPORTED STATEMENT OF PANAMANIAN NEGOTIATOR CARLOS LOPEZ GUEVERA THAT THE GOP IS NOT BOUND
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JURIDICALLY OR MORALLY BY THE THOMPSON-URRUTIA TREATY

OF 1914, WHICH GRANTS COLOMBIA TRANSIT RIGHTS ON THE PANAMA RAILWAY AND CANAL.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER VAZQUEZ CARRIZOSA QUICKLY CALLED ATTENTION TO HIS COMMUNICATION WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER, REAFFIRMING COLOMBIAN TRANSIT RIGHTS ON THE ISTHMUS. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ALSO RELEASED THE TEXT OF THE DEC 13, 1971 NOTE FROM VAZQUEZ TO AMB SACCIO, WHICH CALLED ATTENTION TO THE THOMPSON-URRUTIA TREATY OF 1914 AND POINTED OUT THAT THE TRANSIT RIGHTS GUARANTEED BY THAT TREATY CANNOT BE ABRIDGED WITHOUT GOC CONSENT.

4. OTHER PROMINENT COLOMBIANS JOINED IN REBUTTING THE LOPEZ GUEVERA STATEMENTS. FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER ZEA HERNANDEZ DESCRIBED THE GOC TRANSIT RIGHTS AS QTE INDISPUTABLE UNQTE. CARLOS HOLGUIN, FORMER COLOMBIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE OAS, STATED THAT THE TRANSIT RIGHTS WERE IRREVERSIBLE UNTIL SUCH TIME AS COLOMBIA RENOUNCED THEM. HECTOR CHARRY SAMPER, RECENTLY RETIRED AMBASSADOR TO VENEZUELA, POINTED OUT THE SUPPORT THAT THE GOC HAD GIVEN PANAMA IN EXCEPTING THE CANAL ISSUE FROM THE PROSCRIPTION ON BILATERAL QUESTIONS AT THE BOGOTA CONFERENCE) AND ADDED THAT HE COULD NOT ACCEPT THE IDEA OF A PANAMA-US TREATY THAT IGNORED COLOMBIAN TRANSIT RIGHTS.

5. FOREIGN MINISTER VAZQUEZ, IN A FEB 10 INTERVIEW WITH BOGOTA DAILY EL ESPECTADOR (LIBERAL), REFERRED AGAIN TO THE TEXT OF HIS DEC 13, 1971 NOTE TO AMB SACCIO. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT HE MIGHT RAISE THE TRANSIT QUESTION AT THE MEXICO MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS.

6. BOGOTA PRESS REACTION HAS BEEN AMPLE AND, TO DATE, UNANIMOUS IN SUPPORT OF THE GOC POSITION ON THE TRANSIT RIGHTS. NEWS STORIES HAVE APPEARED ON THE FRONT PAGES OF ALL BOGOTA DAILIES, REPORTING BOTH THE PANAMANIAN STATEMENT AND THE REBUTTALS BY PAST AND PRESENT GOC OFFICIALS. EDITORIAL SUPPORT HAS ALSO BEEN WIDESPREAD, WITH ALL FOUR DAILIES ASSERTING THE VALIDITY OF THE COLOMBIAN TREATY RIGHTS. LIBERAL EL TIEMPO REFLECTED THE TENOR OF THE BOGOTA UNCLASSIFIED

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PRESS IN ITS FEB 11 EDITORIAL, IN WHICH IT EXPRESSED ITS SUPPORT FOR A RE-ORDERING OF THE US-PANAMANIAN RELATIONSHIP, BUT REAFFIRMED THE NECESSITY FOR CONSIDERATION OF GOC TREATY RIGHTS AND SOUGHT THE SUPPORT OF SECRETARY KISSINGER IN THIS MATTER. WHITE

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